Electronic Resources Review: Summon

Nara L. Newcomer

In recent years, options for finding library content have proliferated. Each new wave promises a step closer to the holy grail of one-stop searching from a completely intuitive interface. One of the newest discovery options is Summon (http://www.serialssolutions.com/summon/), a hosted, web-scale discovery service from Serials Solutions. This review evaluates Summon as a tool for music users, considering interface, scope, and metadata.

A brief survey of today's discovery landscape places Summon in context. "Traditional" OPACs no longer index only locally owned physical content; rather, they frequently include subscription and owned electronic content, though not indexed at the article level. Next-gen catalogs (AquaBrowser, Endeca, Primo and others) differ from OPACs primarily regarding interface, not content. Federated search tools broadcast a search to multiple databases, possibly including the catalog, returning results in one interface. Web-scale discovery tools feature interfaces similar to next-gen catalogs and combine articles and catalog data like federated search. However, web-scale discovery tools do not primarily broadcast searches to databases but query internally indexed metadata.

The bulk of the data in any library's Summon instance comes from Summon's central cloud index of over 500 million items from over 94,000 journal and periodical titles, with content coming from over 6,800 publishers. To this cloud, each library may add its local catalog and other repositories. Summon uses information in the library's Serials Solutions KnowledgeWorks knowledge base to scope searches to materials available from that library's physical and electronic resources. Users can also expand searches beyond their library's collection, thus querying the entire Summon cloud index. All searches referenced in this article were conducted on the entire Summon cloud index via East Carolina University's Summon instance. (http://eastcarolina.summon.serialssolutions.com)

Summon gives each library complete control over local content indexing. One of any new Summon customer's first tasks is to provide Serials Solutions with mapping for its catalog and other repositories. For catalog MARC data, Serials Solutions suggests defaults, but it is vital that someone with music cataloging knowledge examines the MARC mapping information to ensure key MARC fields like 240, 245, 505, and 700 are included in the appropriate Summon indexes. If, for example, 240 (uniform title) and title portions of the 700 (added entry) fields, are not included in Summon's TitleCombined index, it will be very difficult to locate music items. For a field to be searchable at all in Summon, it must be included in at least one of the indexes listed in the library's Summon MARC map.

Each item in Summon is mapped to a single content type. Content type limiting/sorting is very important for music patrons who routinely seek information in a variety of specific formats

(score, recording, book, etc.) By default, the content type for catalog items derives from MARC bibliographic data, primarily the fixed fields. Alternately, if a library's existing OPAC successfully bases content type on item information, it may be desirable to configure Summon likewise for consistency.

Summon searching is by keyword only. Music searches are often tacitly frustrated by keyword searching's frequent lack of mechanisms for leading patrons from alternate names and titles to materials they seek. Summon's basic search includes an AutoComplete feature with potential to alleviate these problems. Though a huge step in the right direction and fairly helpful with personal names, performance is barely mediocre for musical work titles. For example, typing *moonlight sonata* brought two suggestions from AutoComplete: *Moonlight Sonata* and *Piano Sonata No. 14*. Though Summon managed to correctly identify the "moonlight" as sonata no. 14, it did not tie it to Beethoven, so accepting the second suggestion will retrieve results for any composer's fourteenth piano sonata. Moreover, the mouseover information about *Moonlight Sonata* references Lorenzo Ferrero's 2000 composition for five percussion instruments, not Beethoven's famous work. The AutoComplete feature is powered by data from many sources but does not include the Library of Congress/NACO Authority File. While recognizing that most article metadata (the overwhelming bulk of Summon's content) is not controlled with LC/NAF forms, the omission of this extensive source of alternate names and titles is detrimental to AutoComplete's success.

Expert users and canned search creators will find Summon's provision for command-line style searches of specific indexes directly from the basic search box very useful. For example, the search *AuthorCombined:(mozart) Publisher:(henle)*, limited to music scores, retrieves Henle scores of Mozart works.

Because Summon focuses on discovery, it lacks an item-level view, though it does provide a (very brief) hit list preview. The full record, and, if applicable, full-text, are provided by the appropriate database, library catalog, or other native source, through the institution's link resolver if necessary.

Summon provides facets for refining search results. Language and subject facets are particularly relevant for music.   The language facet can be configured to include all language aspects of library catalog data (all of MARC 041 and 008/35-37 [Lang]) or only selected portions. Summon ignores undetermined languages (code und) and the non-linguistic content (code zxx) which represents the primary "language" of purely instrumental music.

Summon's subject facets are derived from subject-like metadata in all sources indexed, not just catalog subject headings. When a search is restricted to either items in the library catalog or the content type "books," more specific facets based only on subject headings appear: time period, region, and genre. Summon is built on the assumption that each subject heading subdivision will be split into its own facet. Thus, the "time period" facet, for example, is a mixed array of composer birth and death dates, period subdivisions by decade for jazz and popular musics, and other chronological subdivisions. Though often unhelpful and confusing, these facets provide an option for patrons seeking, say, representative music from different eras without needing a comprehensive listing of available resources.

A common question regarding Summon is "which databases does it cover?" The answer is either "none of them" or "most of them", depending on your perspective, since Serials Solutions receives article metadata from publishers, not database vendors. Summon indexes many of the same titles as databases, but since the metadata in Summon and databases are different, searching each can yield vastly different results.

For example, Summon purportedly includes 100% of JSTOR, but while JSTOR features full-text indexing, Summon relies on citation-level metadata. Narrow, specialized topic searches highlight these metadata differences. Searching JSTOR directly for *Robert Noehren* (a twentieth century organist, organ builder, and scholar), yielded 84 results, but the same search in Summon, restricted to "articles from scholarly publications", yielded 43 hits, only 1 coming from a JSTOR title. Similar results are observed when comparing Summon to International Index to Music Periodicals Full Text. The differences are less pronounced with citation-only databases like Music Index or RILM, though Summon lacks RILM's abstracts and indexing of anthology and Festschrift chapters.

Four notable sources available in Summon beyond article and local content are: public domain music books and scores within HathiTrust content; public domain scores from the Library of Congress' American Memory collections; scores from Alexander Street Press' Classical Scores Library (CSL); and audio recordings from Naxos Music Library (NML), with the metadata for NML items apparently coming directly from Naxos. As of this writing, Summon misleadingly labels NML recordings and CSL scores as "Citation Online", (not "Full Text Online") even though patrons can access the actual streaming recording or score pdf file. Also as of this writing, American Memory scores are assigned the content type "Sheet Music", even though all other scores in Summon are assigned the content type "Music Score". This is prevents collocation and is an unhelpful distinction given the vagaries of the term "sheet music".

Summon is arguably the most comprehensive search currently available and a valuable addition to music users' search tool arsenal when properly configured. Because of its broad scope, Summon is particularly useful for introductory and interdisciplinary research. Despite the hype, Summon is not the holy grail of one-stop searching. This review has noted a number of specific problems with Summon for music, but as Summon is a new and constantly developing tool, it is hoped these may be improved in the near future.

Nara L. Newcomer
Assistant Music Librarian
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC